



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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July 12, 2010
FB10-063

Information about the Federal Fishing Closure in Oil-Affected Portions of the Gulf of Mexico

NOAA Fisheries Service is prohibiting fishing in certain areas of the Gulf of Mexico because of the oil spill. This action is a precautionary measure to ensure public safety and assure consumer confidence in Gulf seafood. Because of shifting currents and winds, rapid changes in the location and extent of the spill are occurring. NOAA Fisheries Service must update the closed area often to ensure fisher and consumer safety. NOAA Fisheries Service does not want to needlessly restrict productive fisheries in areas that are not affected by the oil spill. All commercial and recreational fishing, including catch and release, is prohibited in the closed area; however, transit through the area is allowed.

To give fishermen enough time to comply with changes to the closed area, NOAA Fisheries Service announces any changes daily at 12 noon, eastern time (11 a.m. central time). The new closed area becomes effective at 6 p.m. eastern time (5 p.m. central time). If no changes are made to the closed area on a given day, that is announced as well. NOAA Fisheries Service strongly advises fishermen not to fish in areas where oil or oil sheens (very thin layers of floating oil) are present, even if those areas are not currently closed to fishing.

To Receive Closure Information:

- Send an e-mail to SERO.Communications.Comments@noaa.gov to receive a Fishery Bulletin when coordinates change
- Call 1-800-627-NOAA (1-800-627-6622) to hear a recording of the current coordinates
- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio for the current coordinates
- Text **fishing@gulf** to 84469 to receive messages on your cell phone when coordinates change: (for more information

<http://www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com/go/doc/2931/558107>

- Follow us on Twitter: usnoaagov to read a tweet when the coordinates change

Reminders

If state waters are closed to fishing because of the oil spill, all vessels must comply with that closure. If state waters are not closed to fishing due to the oil spill, federally permitted vessels may fish in those waters while following all other applicable regulations.

Fishing in the closed area is a violation of federal fishing regulations. Both owners and operators of vessels fishing in the closed area are subject to the seizure of their catch, gear, and vessel; civil penalties of as much as \$140,000 per violation; and permit sanctions, including permanent revocation of their permit.

Permit holders are reminded to maintain their federal vessel permits by submitting timely reporting requirements and renewal applications, even if the vessel is not currently engaged in fishing activities.

This information is being provided for your convenience and to assist you in understanding how to keep informed of the closed area. The actual regulations you must follow are published in the Federal Register, and you are responsible for understanding and complying with them as written in English.

Fishermen who wish to contact BP about a claim should call 1-800-440-0858